

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates. The cable ownership

cap is a crucial element of our democratic media, and it should not be weakened.

Several recent court rulings have favored media corporations' desire to grow ever larger and more concentrated; the FCC could resist, by offering justification for its regulations, but few observers expect the agency to do so. "If the Federal Communications Commission is heading in the direction many predict that it is, a new era of mega-media mergers may be on its way," reports the New York Law Journal (10/4/01). "The way to bet here is that they will loosen the rules," adds analyst and former FCC official Blair Levin.

"Looser" rules will very likely also mean higher cable rates for consumers; since the deregulatory Telecommunications Act of 1996, cable rates have risen nearly three times as fast as inflation.

Further media consolidation by lifting the cable ownership cap will not serve the public interest.